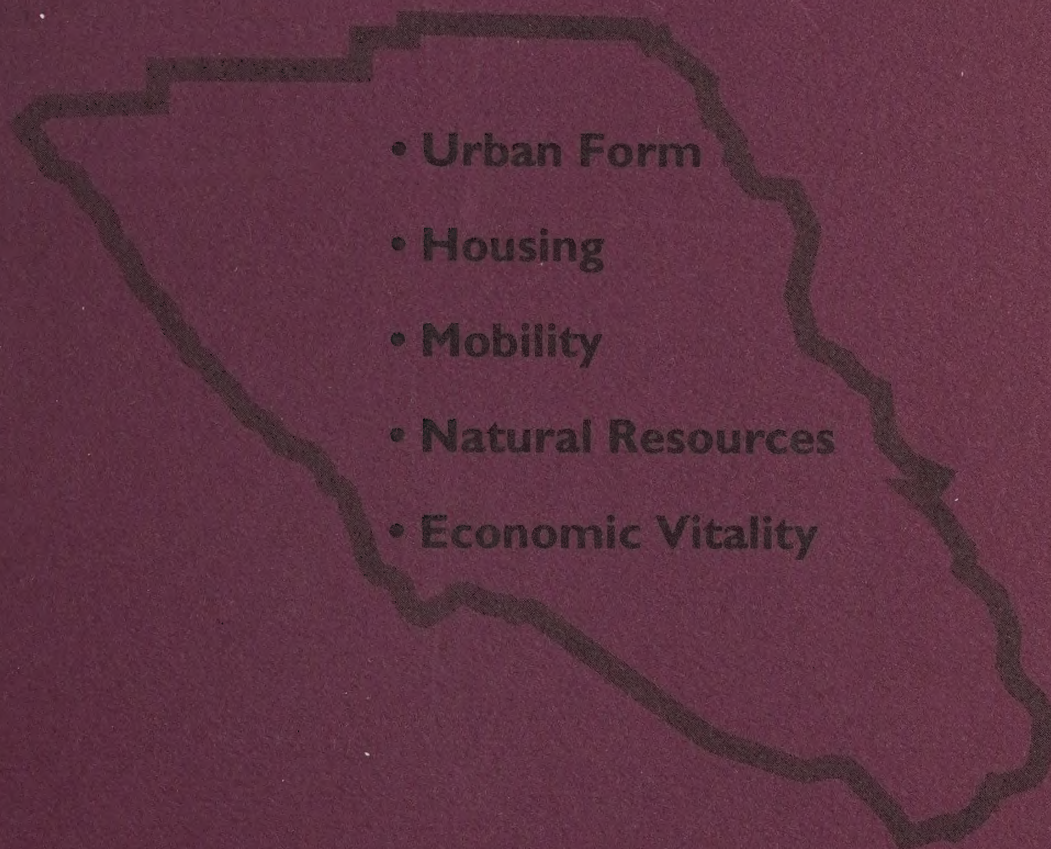


# **Sonoma County Subregion Issues and Policies**

---



**Accepted by the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association  
November 9, 1995**

---

**CLOVERDALE • COTATI • HEALDSBURG • PETALUMA • ROHNERT PARK  
SANTA ROSA • SEBASTOPOL • SONOMA • WINDSOR • SONOMA COUNTY**



# **Sonoma County Subregion Issues and Policies**


---



**Accepted by the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association  
November 9, 1995**

---

**CLOVERDALE • COTATI • HEALDSBURG • PETALUMA • ROHNERT PARK  
SANTA ROSA • SEBASTOPOL • SONOMA • WINDSOR • SONOMA COUNTY**



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2025 with funding from  
State of California and California State Library

<https://archive.org/details/C124910726>

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
I.    The Sonoma Subregional Planning Pilot Project .....	1
II.   Description of the Subregion .....	1
III.  The Subregional Issues and Policies Paper .....	1
IV.   Consensus Process .....	2
V.    Next Steps .....	3
 <b>Location and Intensity of Urban Development .....</b>	 <b>5</b>
I.    Background .....	5
II.   Subregional Issues .....	5
III.  Subregional Policies .....	6
A    Community-centered development .....	6
B.    Community separators .....	7
C.    Other land use policies that further subregional interests .....	7
 <b>Housing .....</b>	 <b>9</b>
I.    Background .....	9
II.   Subregional Issues .....	9
III.  Subregional Policies .....	10
A.    Housing Supply, including special needs groups .....	10
B.    Housing affordability .....	11
C.    Improved state and federal legal requirements regarding planning for, and providing, housing .....	12
D.    Protecting and preserving existing residential areas .....	12
 <b>Mobility .....</b>	 <b>13</b>
I.    Background .....	13
II.   Subregional Issues .....	13
III.  Subregional Policies .....	14
A.    Automobile travel .....	14
B.    Bus and rail travel .....	16
C.    Bicycle and pedestrian travel .....	16
D.    Encouraging alternatives to automobile travel through land use planning .....	17
E.    Enhancing the mobility of non-drivers .....	17
F.    Telecommuting .....	18

<b>Natural Resources</b>	19
I. Background	19
II. Subregional Issues	19
III. Subregional Policies	20
A. Protecting agriculture	20
B. Managing sand and gravel extraction	20
C. Protecting vernal pools and other wetlands	20
D. Protecting scenic resources	21
E. Managing wastewater	21
F. Protecting waterways and preserving water quality	21
G. Ensuring adequate water supply	22
H. Protecting against flood hazard	22
I. Preserving and improving air quality	22
J. Protecting biological resources	22
K. Ensuring adequate parkland	23
L. Dealing with solid waste	23
<b>Economic Vitality</b>	25
I. Background	25
II. Subregional Issues	25
III. Subregional Policies	26
A. Economic viability of agriculture and tourist/recreation activities	26
B. Strategic cooperative approaches to economic development	26
C. Business attraction and retention	27
D. Minimizing impacts of revenue-driven land use decisions	27
E. Availability of a skilled labor force	28
F. Diversification of job opportunities	29
<b>Additional Issues and/or Policies</b>	31
<b>Transmittal Letters</b>	33
I. Transmittal of Working Draft from Planning Directors to Working Group	33
II. Transmittal of First Revision Draft from Working Group to Mayors' & Councilmembers' Association	35
<b>Planning Directors, Consultant and Staff</b>	37

# **Sonoma County Subregion Issues and Policies**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **I. The Sonoma Subregional Planning Pilot Project**

This document, the "Sonoma County Subregional Issues and Policies Paper," is the result of a challenging experiment in collaborative planning undertaken by the County of Sonoma and the nine incorporated cities within the County. These ten local governments were motivated by the belief that, while each has a unique identity and needs, they also share certain interests and concerns. Recognizing these things they have in common, the ten jurisdictions embarked on an attempt to identify how they might work together to address issues that each recognizes as important to its residents.

In pursuing this collaborative process, the local governments within the County found an ally in the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). ABAG was developing a pilot program to support subregional planning activities along the lines of what was being attempted in Sonoma County. The Sonoma County jurisdictions sought funding for activities and was selected as one of two subregional pilot projects to be funded by ABAG.

The Sonoma Subregional Planning Pilot Project reflects an emerging trend toward subregional planning and coordination. The challenge is to address planning issues in ways that recognize and respect both the individual and shared interests and characteristics of the localities within the County, relying on incentives not mandates for implementation. The subregional planning strategy then, becomes a crucial building block in addressing the shared concerns of the larger region -- the nine-county Bay Area.

### **II. Description of the Subregion**

The Sonoma Subregional Planning Pilot Project addresses an area defined by the boundaries of Sonoma County (the "Subregion"). The Subregion is roughly 1,600 square miles and includes nine incorporated cities (Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma and Windsor. These nine cities and the County of Sonoma (collectively, the "Jurisdictions") collaborated in developing this Subregional Issues and Policies Paper.

### **III. The Subregional Issues and Policies Paper**

This document identifies a series of "Subregional Issues" -- critical issues that the Jurisdictions have determined may be most effectively addressed collaboratively. Issues were identified as "subregional" if:

- 1) they involve matters where local activities or decisionmaking has effects which cross over jurisdictional boundaries (for example, issues affecting traffic, housing, and air quality) potentially affecting the subregion or region; and/or
- 2) they can most effectively be addressed through some type of inter-jurisdictional cooperation (for example, by the Jurisdictions working together to establish and implement a plan or program).

The Subregional Issues are presented under five headings: Location and Intensity of Urban Development, Housing, Mobility, Natural Resources, and Economic Vitality.

This paper then identifies a series of policies (the "Subregional Policies") to address the Subregional Issues. The Subregional Policies are intended to provide guidance to the Jurisdictions in their planning processes, in establishing cooperative enterprises, etc. Their adoption and implementation by the various Jurisdictions is not mandatory and is subject to local discretion and applicable legal and logistical limitations.

Some of the Subregional Policies would be implemented through strictly local actions; these include the phrase, "*Each Jurisdiction should ..*" and an icon of one civic building. For other Subregional Policies, coordinated actions among Jurisdictions are called for (some involving all of the Jurisdictions and some a smaller group), or it has not been determined whether there is a need for such cooperation. These Subregional Policies include the phrase, "*The Jurisdictions should ..*" and an icon of people around a table, indicating collaboration.

#### **IV. Consensus Process**

This document reflects the combined efforts of the planning directors of the cities and the county of Sonoma County, a Sonoma State University professor serving as a consultant, a senior staff member from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Working Group. The issues and policies included in this report are addressed because they were felt to be important considerations for the combined focus of all the Jurisdictions in the subregion. They seek to reflect the subregion's common goals and mutual interests, recognizing each Jurisdiction's independence and interdependence.

The project began with a review of general plans of the nine cities and the county to identify policies relating to issues of subregional concern. These existing policies were augmented by additional policies proposed for consideration. The result was a Working Draft Issues and Policies paper prepared by the subregion's Planning Directors, with assistance from the consultant and ABAG staff.

The Working Draft Issues and Policies report was then presented to the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Working Group, which circulated it among all elected officials; check-off

response boxes provided an opportunity for widespread input on the relative agreement on issues and policies. The Working Group then used a consensus process to amend and refine the document. This document was presented to the full Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association on November 9, 1995. The Association unanimously accepted the document with the following motion:

*"The Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association of Sonoma County hereby accepts the draft of **Sonoma County Subregion Issues and Policies**, as presented by the Working Group on November 9, 1995, as a non-binding discussion document for Sonoma County; and in recognition of the high level of participation and consensus in the development of the document would urge that it be referred to each city council and the board of supervisors for further review, discussion and consideration of implementation priorities."*

## **V. Next Steps**

As indicated in the above motion of the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association, it is anticipated that individual Jurisdictions will now bring this document back to their full councils or board, respectively, and after local review and consideration, each Jurisdiction will develop:

- 1) general feedback regarding this subregional Issues and Policies document;
- 2) a prioritization of the issues to serve as an action agenda; and
- 3) recommendations regarding appropriate collaborative follow-on work and implementation.

In addition, the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association and its Working Group encourages each Jurisdiction review the following policy recommendations that are identified for strictly local action, and to the extent deemed locally desirable and appropriate, implement those policies.



## **LOCATION AND INTENSITY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

### **I. Background**

Urban development within the Subregion is concentrated in its nine incorporated cities and a number of urbanized areas in the unincorporated portion of the Subregion. All of the cities except Sebastopol and Sonoma are located on Highway 101, the major north-south route through the Subregion. One of the Subregion's distinguishing characteristics is the uniqueness of its communities, which are in many cases centered around a vital downtown area.

The general plans of the Jurisdictions acknowledge substantial pressure for additional growth in the Subregion.

### **II. Subregional Issues**

The Jurisdictions share, to a large degree, a common vision of the land use patterns that should characterize the Subregion. Achieving this vision is reflected in the following Subregional Issues, which are:

How to:

- A. Ensure compact patterns of urban development centered on existing areas of such development (i.e., "community-centered development").
- B. Identify and maintain "community separators" between urbanized areas.
- C. Address other land use issues that further subregional interests, while recognizing the general patterns of development established by community-centered development and community separators.

### III. Subregional Policies

#### A. Community-centered development



1. Each Jurisdiction should establish its own Urban Limit Line (ULL), to be applicable through the term of its general plan (a typical general plan “horizon” is 20 years). The County should establish a ULL for each area of urban development in the unincorporated portion of the Subregion.



2. Revisions proposed during the term of the applicable general plan should be permitted only if necessary to address a documented health hazard, or when all of the following conditions are met:
  - a) the revision would be consistent with the planning principles upon which the original determination of the ULL was based; and
  - b) the revision is otherwise consistent with the goals and policies of the applicable general plan; and
  - c) the revision would not promote sprawl or leapfrog development or induce additional adjustments to the ULL.

Revisions to a ULL may be most appropriate when made in conjunction with a major general plan update.



3. The Jurisdictions should limit development outside of the ULL to uses that would not: require the extension of sewer or water service, jeopardize the continued viability of agriculture, or threaten the integrity of existing scenic, open space, and other natural resources.



4. Each Jurisdiction should limit its extension of sewer and water service to those areas within its ULL.



5. Each Jurisdiction should work with Sonoma County LAFCO to prevent land from being annexed to a city unless
  - a) it is within that city’s ULL; and
  - b) there is existing adequate water, sewer, police, fire and schools capacity, or such capacity will be made available prior to new development being completed.



6. Each Jurisdiction should work with Sonoma County LAFCO to ensure that the Sphere of Influence for each city within the Subregion does not extend beyond that city's ULL, thereby avoiding any confusion regarding those areas to which sewer and water service should be extended.

## **B. Community separators**



1. The Jurisdictions should establish a procedure for:
  - a) evaluating whether the eight Community Separators identified in the Sonoma County General Plan should be reconfigured;
  - b) evaluating whether additional Community Separators should be identified; and
  - c) determining permitted uses within Community Separators.



2. The Jurisdictions should work cooperatively to develop recommendations to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and/or other public agencies and non-profit organizations regarding the acquisition of fee and less-than-fee interests (e.g., the purchase of development rights) to land within the Community Separators.



3. The Jurisdictions should not extend sewer and water services into the Community Separators.

## **C. Other land use policies that further subregional interests**



1. In order to facilitate cooperation between Jurisdictions regarding land use decisions of mutual concern, the Jurisdictions should be given an opportunity to review and comment upon land use proposals.



2. Within its ULL, each Jurisdiction should designate sufficient land, and at appropriate densities, to accommodate the need for housing for all income groups.



3. In order to facilitate the efficient provision of infrastructure and public services, each Jurisdiction should determine the sequence in which it wishes development to occur within its ULL and establish mechanisms to implement such determinations.



4. Each Jurisdiction should encourage transit-oriented land use patterns in appropriate locations to enhance the viability of subregional transit operations, within the targets of the general plan. The Jurisdictions should undertake a cooperative effort to determine what such amounts and concentrations would be.



5. The Jurisdictions should cooperate in achieving and maintaining a subregional network of public open space areas, including functional linkages between such areas, and including hiking and equestrian trails and bicycle paths.



6. Each Jurisdiction should develop and implement policies regarding the protection of ridges, hillsides, and other significant landforms visible to those living in other areas of, or passing through, the Subregion.



7. Each Jurisdiction should encourage walking and bicycling as modes of transportation by locating residential development, including higher density development, close to employment, retail and other commercial uses, and community services and facilities.



8. Prior to approving new development, each Jurisdiction should ensure that adequate water, sewer, police, fire, school, and other service capacities are in place, or that such capacity will be made available prior to new development being completed.



9. The Jurisdictions should cooperate in addressing the siting of cellular phone transmission towers and similar facilities.

# HOUSING

## I. Background

The Subregion has experienced significant growth in population and households during recent decades and housing demand will likely continue to be high, given the attractive quality of life to be found here. In addition, there is a growing awareness of the critical importance of an adequate supply of housing to achieving a healthy economic climate. For the Subregion, as well as the state and region, continued economic vitality requires a full range of affordable and available housing within a reasonable distance of employment opportunities.

In many ways, the housing market operates at a subregional, rather than a strictly local, level. In light of this, and given the fiscal disincentives for local governments that are often associated with residential development, there are benefits to a subregional approach to addressing housing issues.

## II. Subregional Issues

The following are issues relating to the provision of housing that would benefit from being addressed cooperatively by the Jurisdictions and/or for which local actions have subregional effects. These Subregional Issues are:

How to:

- A. Ensure an adequate supply of housing to serve the existing and future needs of the Subregion, including the needs of large families, seniors, and others with special housing needs.
- B. Promote housing that is affordable to the full spectrum of present and expected residents of the Subregion.
- C. Improve state and federal legal requirements on local governments with regard to planning for, and providing, housing.
- D. Protect, preserve, and invest in existing residential areas, especially those providing affordable or moderately-priced housing.

### III. Subregional Policies

#### A. Housing supply, including special needs groups



1. The Jurisdictions should create a subregional committee or task force to promote housing for very low, low and moderate-income households and for people with special needs, through inter-jurisdictional participation and public/private partnerships. Examples of possible activities include: subregional programs to establish a housing data base, co-sponsored joint development projects (especially for affordable or special needs housing), legislative advocacy, and public education and information.



2. The Jurisdictions should coordinate local efforts to designate and fund jointly the development of specific sites, including vacant buildings, for the provision of temporary housing needs, such as homeless shelters, transitional housing, and housing for seasonal workers.



3. The Jurisdictions should continue coordinated public/private partnerships to ensure mutual understanding of subregional housing needs and the practices and needs of the development community, and to develop ways to improve housing production and lower housing costs.



4. Each Jurisdiction should encourage the provision of special needs housing, including community care facilities for seniors, mentally or physically disabled, and children, in residential and mixed use areas and especially near transit and services.



5. Each Jurisdiction should consider streamlining processing for second units in urban areas.



6. Each Jurisdiction should encourage mixed use development and multiple family housing in appropriate locations, especially near commercial and civic uses and in areas with existing or planned transit.



7. To meet a variety of housing needs and varied levels of affordability, each Jurisdiction should encourage a range of unit sizes and types and lot designs in new residential developments.



8. Each Jurisdiction should encourage new residential developments to include units and facilities to accommodate households with children and seniors.



9. Each Jurisdiction should establish incentives and design guidelines for residential uses above ground floor commercial uses.



10. Each Jurisdiction should consider adopting minimum, as well as maximum, densities within all residential planning and zoning categories to prevent under-utilization of residential sites.



11. Each Jurisdiction should consider rezoning in order to increase residential densities in appropriate locations, especially in areas with superior existing or planned transit service, while protecting the quality of life in the "upzoned" area.



12. Each Jurisdiction should consider a policy that would maintain the overall residential capacity and mix of unit types, consistent with the Jurisdiction's adopted general plan and its ability to provide services.



13. Each Jurisdiction should encourage that development projects over a certain size occur at or above the midpoint of the applicable density range.



14. Each Jurisdiction should promote opportunities for people to live and work in the same community.

## **B. Housing affordability**



1. Each Jurisdiction should consider exemptions from certain requirements (e.g., zoning ordinance provisions, subdivision standards, and growth management programs) for housing affordable to lower income households and projects providing an established minimum percentage of affordable units, based on goals established by each Jurisdiction.



2. The Jurisdictions should explore joint financing possibilities to provide lower-cost loans for the purchase, rehabilitation and/or new construction of affordable housing.



3. Each Jurisdiction should encourage innovation in housing design and construction practices which might lower costs (e.g., manufactured housing).



4. Each Jurisdiction should actively pursue redevelopment projects and spend lower and moderate-income housing funds generated by such projects.



5. Each Jurisdiction should identify and consider making available vacant publicly-owned sites and buildings for the development of affordable housing and or mixed use.



6. Each Jurisdiction should establish an “inclusionary” program to ensure the provision of affordable housing through either on- or off-site construction payment of in-lieu fees or other means. The Jurisdictions should consider adopting a standardized subregional inclusionary program, which could help to “level the playing field” throughout the Subregion.



7. The Jurisdictions should work with employers to develop partnerships and/or programs to make housing affordable to their workers. Actions might include encouraging employers to facilitate housing availability and affordability for their workers by providing building sites, funding, or the provision of residential units. Incentives for such participation might include faster processing for building permits, fee waivers, etc.

#### **C. Improved state and federal legal requirements regarding planning for, and providing, housing**



1. The Jurisdictions should support a cooperative process to distribute subregional housing allocations, and advocate for changes in state law to allow for the development of subregionally-generated housing needs allocations.

#### **D. Protecting and preserving existing residential areas**



1. Each Jurisdiction should identify and implement steps needed to preserve existing affordable housing.



2. Each Jurisdiction should promote programs that provide replacement housing when residential units are lost or destroyed. Each Jurisdiction should require that replacement housing be constructed so as to avoid natural hazards.

## **MOBILITY**

### **I. Background**

As the Subregion has experienced growth in both population and jobs, there have been resulting strains on the Subregion's transportation system. Furthermore, the growth projected by the Jurisdictions' general plans is expected to create additional stresses and result in new challenges.

### **II. Subregional Issues**

Each of the Jurisdictions recognizes the need to make improvements to the transportation system that serves the Subregion. Concerns about providing adequate transportation capacity to serve anticipated growth, traffic congestion, deteriorating air quality, time lost to travel, a lack of viable alternatives to automobile travel, etc., are evident throughout the Subregion. The Jurisdictions have identified the following Subregional Issues as critical to addressing transportation needs of the Subregion's residents now and into the future. These Subregional Issues are:

How to:

- A. Improve the efficiency of automobile travel, while limiting its negative consequences, such as traffic congestion.
- B. Increase the viability of bus travel, and possibly rail travel, as alternatives to automobile travel.
- C. Reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and otherwise improve the quality of life in the Subregion by promoting bicycling and walking as modes of transportation.
- D. Encourage alternatives to automobile travel through land use planning.
- E. Enhance the mobility of children and youth, the non-driving elderly, the non-driving handicapped, and other non-drivers.
- F. Promote telecommuting as a work site alternative.

### III. Subregional Policies

#### A. Automobile travel



1. The Jurisdictions should identify needed improvements to the Subregional roadway network, and each Jurisdiction should make provision for rights-of-way necessary to accommodate those improvements.



2. The Jurisdictions should take available actions to encourage and facilitate Caltrans':

- a) designating the planned additional travel lanes on Highway 101 between the Sonoma/Marin County border and Windsor for use by high occupancy vehicles (HOV) and transit use during peak travel periods; and
- b) giving construction priority to lane additions for the portion of Highway 101 between Petaluma and Windsor. Designation of HOV lanes should be accompanied by increased frequency of bus service, when warranted.



3. The Jurisdictions should encourage Caltrans to improve Highway 101 south of Petaluma in order to eliminate direct vehicle access.



4. The Jurisdictions should improve the efficiency of existing parallel arterials in the Highway 101 corridor in order to increase the utility of these arterials as alternative routes during peak travel periods.



5. Each Jurisdiction should encourage a reduction in auto use, single occupant auto use, and traffic congestion by promoting the following actions by employers: providing incentives for carpooling and vanpooling (such as preferential parking spaces or parking subsidies for carpools and vanpools), offering flex time and modified work schedules to employees, offering telecommuting opportunities, and employing transportation coordinators. An example of such encouragement by a Jurisdiction could be to allow reductions in required parking in return for employer-sponsored and administered carpooling, vanpooling, telecommuting, or transit passes.



6. In making determinations regarding the Subregional roadway network, the Jurisdictions should give priority to maintaining community identities and the overall the quality of life in each Jurisdiction, over accommodating traffic.



7. The Jurisdictions should develop a circulation system that will accommodate the needs of projected development, but not provide capacity substantially beyond those needs.



8. Each Jurisdiction should consider requiring new parking facilities to accommodate new transportation technologies.



9. Each Jurisdiction should identify the need for and encourage the development of new park-and-ride lots to facilitate carpooling and vanpooling.



10. The Jurisdictions should prepare a coordinated response to proposed development projects in adjacent counties that would affect the commute on Highway 101.

## **B. Bus and rail travel**



1. Each Jurisdiction should identify the need for additional transit stops and park-and-ride lots for transit users and make provision for the development of such facilities.



2. The Jurisdictions should evaluate establishing passenger rail service on the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, and should encourage Marin and Mendocino Counties to participate cooperatively in this effort.



3. If passenger rail service is developed through the Subregion, the Jurisdictions should work together to ensure that such system will accommodate the needs of projected development, but not provide capacity substantially beyond those needs.



4. The Jurisdictions should take available actions to preserve the Northwestern Pacific Railroad's right-of-way for future bus and/or rail transit use.



5. The Jurisdictions should take available actions to coordinate transit services between the various transit operators (local, subregional, and regional) in the Subregion. Examples of such coordination could include: coordinating schedules to increase transfer potential, encouraging joint transit fare prepayment, and discounting fares for intersystem transfers.



6. The Jurisdictions should identify and establish a series of "transit centers" with supporting park-and-ride lots. In so doing, the Jurisdictions should: avoid rerouting buses, provide adequate off-street parking, provide convenient pedestrian access from activity centers, and avoid arterials with heavy traffic.



7. In selecting transit routes, the Jurisdictions should provide convenient access to major job centers, retail and recreation areas, high and medium density residential areas, and major health care and educational facilities.



8. The Jurisdictions should work together, with surrounding cities and counties, and with Sonoma County Transportation Agency and regional agencies such as Metropolitan Transportation Commission, to lobby for increased funding for transit.



9. Each Jurisdiction should encourage employers to provide incentives for employees to use transit (e.g., employee transit allowances, shuttle buses from between job centers and transit stops).

## C. Bicycle and pedestrian travel



1. The Jurisdictions should cooperate in developing and implementing a subregional bikeways plan and should ensure consistency between local, subregional, and regional bikeway alignments. The Countywide Bicycle Advisory Committee might be the appropriate entity for developing the subregional bikeways plan.



2. Each Jurisdiction should promote bicycle and pedestrian facilities to provide connections between its transit stops, residential areas, employment centers, retail areas, and schools and other public facilities.



3. Each Jurisdiction should encourage employers to provide facilities for bicycle use (e.g., racks, lockers, showers).

## **D. Encouraging alternatives to automobile travel through land use planning**



1. In order to improve the viability of transit, each Jurisdiction should establish higher residential densities and greater intensity of commercial and employment-generating development along existing or potential transit routes. For example, this could include encouraging more intense development in suburban business parks in order to make them efficient destinations for transit. It could also include promoting infill development and redevelopment in central business districts that are already well served by transit. In its land use planning, each Jurisdiction should promote safe, direct, attractive pedestrian access between transit stops and neighboring development.



2. Each Jurisdiction should encourage pedestrian-oriented mixed use development that includes commercial and employment activities and housing.



3. Each Jurisdiction should encourage the development of major commercial, office, and institutional centers in areas that can be served by existing or planned transit capable of accommodating potential users.



4. Each Jurisdiction should encourage neighborhood-serving commercial uses within walking distance of urban residential areas.



5. Each Jurisdiction should adopt policies which promote appropriate home-based work opportunities (e.g., live/work areas, etc.).



6. Each Jurisdiction should adopt land use and housing policies that promote an appropriate balance of jobs and housing within that Jurisdiction.

## **E. Enhancing the mobility of non-drivers**



1. In developing the subregional transit system, the Jurisdictions should pay particular attention to the needs of transit-dependent residents of the Subregion, such as non-driving seniors, children and youth, non-driving handicapped, etc.

## **F. Telecommuting**



1. Each Jurisdiction should encourage the establishment of telecommuting centers that provide fax machines, telephones, computers with networking capabilities, and other office equipment, allowing workers to work close to home.



2. Each Jurisdiction should encourage employers to offer telecommuting opportunities to employees.



3. Each Jurisdiction should consider adopting residential development standards to facilitate telecommuting. Such standards should be developed in coordination with utility providers and could apply to both new construction and retrofitting of existing construction.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **I. Background**

The Subregion is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. The Jurisdictions recognize the value of these resources and the importance to the Subregion of their protection and management.

### **II. Subregional Issues**

The following Subregional Issues relate to natural resources.

How to:

- A. Protect the Subregion's agricultural economy, with the attendant visual and other quality of life benefits enjoyed by residents throughout the Subregion.
- B. Permit the extraction of sand and gravel from the Russian River area, while protecting water quality and other uses in the area (e.g., residences and vineyards).
- C. Protect wetlands, including vernal pools, within the Subregion while, at the same time, not unduly restricting economic development or the interests of private property owners.
- D. Protect scenic resources that are of subregional importance.
- E. Dispose of wastewater generated in the Subregion in a safe, cost-effective, and environmentally sound manner.
- F. Protect waterways and preserve water quality within the Subregion.
- G. Ensure an adequate supply of water for various uses within the Subregion.
- H. Protect effectively against flood hazard within the Subregion.
- I. Preserve and, as needed, improve air quality within the Subregion.
- J. Provide appropriate protection to plants and animals within the Subregion, including rare and endangered plant and animal species, while, at the same time, not unduly restricting economic development or the interests of private property owners.

- K. Ensure the provision of adequate parkland within the Subregion.
- L. Ensure the Subregion's ongoing ability to deal effectively with its solid waste.

### **III. Subregional Policies**

#### **A. Protecting agriculture**



1. The Jurisdictions should continue to support the policies in the Agricultural Resources Element of the County's General Plan.



2. In order to reduce urban/agricultural conflicts, each Jurisdiction should develop and implement policies applicable to proposed urban development near existing agricultural uses. Such policies should be sensitive to the needs of ongoing agricultural activities.



3. The Jurisdictions, in cooperation with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, should identify critical agricultural lands for acquisition of development rights, and should cooperate in facilitating such acquisition.

#### **B. Managing sand and gravel extraction**



1. The Jurisdictions should abide by Sonoma County's Aggregate Resources Management Plan.

#### **C. Protecting vernal pools and other wetlands**



1. The Jurisdictions should cooperate in developing a subregional wetlands policy, addressing issues such as acquisition, enhancement, monitoring and management.



2. The Jurisdictions should continue to encourage the timely completion of the work of the Sonoma County Vernal Pools Taskforce.

## **D. Protecting scenic resources**



1. Each Jurisdiction should conserve trees and other significant vegetation along designated scenic routes within the Subregion, and should plant trees as appropriate in such areas.

## **E. Managing wastewater**



1. The Jurisdictions should develop long-term, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solutions for wastewater treatment and reuse.



2. The Jurisdictions should continue and expand use of treated wastewater as a resource.



3. The Jurisdictions should support programs to reduce the per capita generation of wastewater within the Subregion.



4. The Jurisdictions should encourage appropriate application of sludge generated in the Subregion to agricultural land within the Subregion, thereby taking advantage of the value of sludge as a resource, while also reducing strains on landfill capacity.

## **F. Protecting waterways and preserving water quality**



1. The Jurisdictions, along with the Sonoma County Water Agency, and recognizing that watersheds frequently lie within more than one Jurisdiction, should develop a subregional waterways master plan for the purpose of preserving and restoring creeks and other waterways and their surrounding habitats.



2. The Jurisdictions should work cooperatively to protect, enhance, and restore waterways of subregional, regional, and/or statewide importance, including San Pablo Bay, and wetlands and upland habitats adjacent to such waterways.



3. Each Jurisdiction should ensure that land use decisions do not impair surface water and groundwater quality of the Subregion.

## **G. Ensuring adequate water supply**



1. The Jurisdictions should prepare and implement a Subregional Water Conservation and Reclamation Plan for the purpose of conserving water and avoiding the need for costly storage and distribution facilities to serve the Subregion.



2. Each Jurisdiction should identify and protect groundwater recharge areas and monitor groundwater extraction in order to prevent overdrafting.

## **H. Protecting against flood hazard**



1. Each Jurisdiction should implement and enforce its existing flood management program.



2. The Jurisdictions should work cooperatively to ensure provision of identified multi-jurisdictional storm drainage improvements.



3. The Jurisdictions should encourage the Federal Emergency Management Agency to complete and refine its mapping of flood hazard areas. The Jurisdictions should provide recommendations to FEMA regarding the order in which areas should be addressed.

## **I. Preserving and improving air quality**



1. Each Jurisdiction should develop and adopt an air quality element in its general plan or otherwise integrate air quality goals, policies and programs into its general plan.



2. The Jurisdictions should continue to cooperate with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District or, if applicable, the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, in implementing the appropriate Clean Air Plan.

## **J. Protecting biological resources**



1. The Jurisdictions should support creating a habitat conservation system for the Subregion designed to meet diverse biological needs while addressing economic development considerations. Such an effort would be undertaken in cooperation with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies; environmental organizations; developers; industry groups; and other interested parties.



2. Each Jurisdiction should encourage the restoration of degraded riparian habitats along waterways of subregional importance.



3. Each Jurisdiction should retain existing riparian vegetation along waterways of subregional importance.



4. The Jurisdictions should cooperate in identifying critical riparian and other habitats for acquisition by public or non-profit entities, and in facilitating such acquisition.



5. The Jurisdictions should promote protection for the native marine and shoreline plant and animal communities along the Pacific coastline and San Pablo Bay shoreline.

## **K. Ensuring adequate parkland**



1. The Jurisdictions should work cooperatively regarding the development, operation, and maintenance of parks and other recreational facilities.

## **L. Dealing with solid waste**



1. Each Jurisdiction should continue to implement cost-effective solid waste source reduction programs.



## **ECONOMIC VITALITY**

### **I. Background**

Historically recognized for its agricultural economy, the Subregion is experiencing strong diversification in employment. High levels of recent job growth have occurred in construction, retail trade (department and apparel stores), and services (hotels/lodgings facilities, engineering, management, etc.). Future expansion in service employment is expected to be particularly strong in engineering, accounting, research and management services, as well as business and health services and private education. Retail trade is anticipated to be the second major generator of new jobs, over half of which is expected to occur in restaurants and department stores. High technology employment (a component of manufacturing) is also expected to increase significantly, from nearly 11,000 in 1990 to nearly 19,000 by 2010.

The Subregion weathered the economic recession of the early 1990s remarkably well. Whereas most counties, and the region as a whole, withstood pronounced and painful contractions in employment, the Subregion experienced an increase of some 14,000 jobs between 1990 and 1995. Current (1995) countywide employment is estimated at about 163,900.

### **II. Subregional Issues**

Profound global economic restructuring is underway. A key to success in dealing with this restructuring will be a strategic and cooperative approach to shift from less efficient activities and business approaches to higher-value added per employee activities and facilities (to support a rising standard of living and counteract national trends pointing in the opposite direction). The pace and scale of potential economic change, as well the scope of possible opportunities and pitfalls, compel local jurisdictions to pursue partnerships of business, education, labor and government. Worldwide, such creative partnerships are increasingly seen as models of success. A desirable role of government is that of a facilitator within the larger economic system: to serve as a vehicle for communication and to foster a consensus for action.

The following are issues relating to the economic vitality of the Subregion.

How to:

- A. Promote continued economic viability of agriculture and tourism/recreation activities.
- B. Establish strategic cooperative approaches to economic development.
- C. Retain existing businesses and attract new businesses critical to the future economic success of the Subregion.

- D. Minimize negative impacts of revenue-driven land use decisions.
- E. Ensure the availability of a skilled labor force.
- F. Ensure diversified employment opportunities.

### **III. Subregional Policies**

#### **A. Economic viability of agriculture and tourist/recreation activities**



1. In order to protect agriculture, including viticulture, and promote rural-related tourism and recreation, the Jurisdictions should consider developing standard ordinances or guidelines for urban areas that abut vineyard and other agricultural uses and rural-related tourism and recreation activities (e.g., wineries, equestrian uses, etc.). These ordinances and guidelines might apply to permitted uses, site development standards, landscaping and design guidelines, transitional areas, etc.










2. The Jurisdictions should cooperate in promoting the abundance of subregional tourist attractions including: the Sonoma Coast, the Russian River, historic downtowns, wineries, equestrian facilities, exotic animal facilities, small scale agricultural production, agricultural fairs and special events, etc.

#### **B. Strategic cooperative approaches to economic development**




1. The Jurisdictions should create and support a task force or public-private partnership to develop a strategic economic action plan and programs for the Subregion. This action plan would identify and promote key clusters of economic activity for which the Subregion has a competitive advantage and which are consistent with other public policy objectives. The Jurisdictions should consider partnership with Sonoma State University and/or other educational institutions in this endeavor.

### **C. Business attraction and retention**

-  1. Each Jurisdiction should identify and mitigate, where appropriate, obstacles to the formation and expansion of local businesses.
-  2. The Jurisdictions should identify businesses that could serve unmet needs of the Subregion's residents, and develop specific strategies to attract those identified businesses.
-  3. The Jurisdictions should monitor the absorption and availability of land for economic activity within the subregion to ensure a balanced supply of available land for a variety of business sectors.
-  4. The Jurisdictions should coordinate capital improvements and other infrastructure development to coincide with the needs of existing and future businesses. Public facility design should also accommodate technological change such as fiber optics, wireless communication, and fuel-efficient vehicles.
-  5. Each Jurisdiction should expedite the development review process for desirable employment-generating projects, including re-use of vacant sites, small business development, and existing business expansion.
-  6. Each Jurisdiction should identify and recruit specific businesses to its downtown (in the case of the County, to the "downtowns" of areas of urban development in the unincorporated portion of the Subregion).
-  7. The Jurisdictions should work cooperatively among themselves and with the Regional Water Quality Control Board and other applicable agencies to develop procedures for the timely cleanup of toxics on otherwise appropriate development sites and should consider legislative advocacy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulations governing such sites.

### **D. Minimizing impacts of revenue-driven land use decisions**

-  1. The Jurisdictions should develop recommendations and advocate for reform of state-fiscal laws and policies in order to offset revenue-driven land use plans and development programs.



2. The Jurisdictions should consider subregional revenue sharing agreements to offset the fiscal impacts of land use decisions. By reducing incentives to base land use decisions on the fiscal impacts of those decisions, revenue sharing agreements could:
  - a) promote orderly subregional development;
  - b) diminish the potential for over-development of certain types of businesses (e.g., retail) within the Subregion, which can result in vacant buildings that do not easily adapt to re-use; and
  - c) redistribute revenues to where the impacts caused by a revenue-generating use (e.g. increased traffic or demand for services) would be felt.

#### **E. Availability of a skilled labor force**



1. The Jurisdictions should, in cooperation with local employers and other entities, identify the labor force requirements and job training needs of existing and future employers. The Jurisdictions should support and/or establish employment training and vocational education programs to ensure resident's skills meet employers' current and future needs.



2. The Jurisdictions should encourage cooperation between employment development departments, Sonoma State University, community colleges, local school districts, and employers to ensure that appropriate programs, classes, and internships are available to potential employees of the Subregion's businesses.



3. The Jurisdictions should seek to overcome impediments to gainful employment such as lack of transportation, childcare, job training, vocational education, and other factors.



4. Each Jurisdiction should work with developers and appropriate public and nonprofit agencies to provide for the development of sufficient housing for the Subregion's labor force. Such housing should reflect a range of sizes and prices in order to meet the needs of workers employed in the Subregion and in order to ensure employers access to a diverse labor pool.

## **F. Diversification of job opportunities**



1. The Jurisdictions should seek to attract a wide range of employment opportunities to the Subregion, thereby expanding the ability of all residents to find employment.



2. Each Jurisdiction should promote the establishment and expansion of workplace alternatives (including home occupations, telecommuting, and technology transfer based businesses) by identifying appropriate sites, providing infrastructure, creating home occupation incubators, and by acting as a facilitator to encourage such workplace alternatives.



## ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND/OR POLICIES

Working Group members proposed the following additional issues and/or policies for consideration and follow-on activity as a subregion:

1. Social Services/Human Services/ Health Services. Develop subregional cooperation regarding development and the provision of all human services to meet the needs of the County — include cooperative planning, funding, etc. and avoid duplication, fragmentation, etc.
2. Address Diversity and the Changing Ethnic and Cultural Make-Up of the County. Recognize these changes and develop plans to address associated needs, including education, services, etc.
3. Joint Powers Agreements for Service Provision. Encourage the development of joint powers agreements among cities for the provision of local services in order to trim costs, etc. Consider privatization of public services where appropriate.
4. Countywide Cooperative Planning. Encourage cooperative planning with the entire county, including schools, business, etc.
5. Water Supply. Address the availability of a viable future water source (or sources).
6. Northwest Pacific Railroad R.O.W. Work as a subregion with the Northwest Pacific Railroad regarding right-of-way, potential uses and future development.
7. Child Care Facilities Near Transit. Add a policy to the mobility section: Each Jurisdictions should encourage the location of child care sites near transit stops to facilitate transit use.
8. Telecommunications Policy. Establish a subregional telecommunications policy.



## MEMORANDUM


DATE: September 28, 1995  
TO: MAYORS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS WORKING GROUP  
FROM: PLANNING DIRECTORS OF SONOMA COUNTY  
SUBJECT: SONOMA COUNTY SUBREGIONAL PLANNING PILOT PROJECT

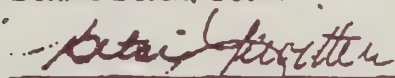
It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that the Planning Directors of the nine cities and the county present this working draft of the Sonoma County Subregional Issues and Policies Report to the Mayors and Council Members Working Group. This draft represents many hours of discussion identifying key issues in Sonoma County's future and compiling and comparing General Plan Policies of all the jurisdictions relating to these issues. We hope our efforts will enable you to establish consensus on approaches to subregional planning and the appropriate directions on which the cities and county should collaborate.


This pilot program, financed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), is both ambitious and limited. It is ambitious by virtue of its innovative approach to identify consensus points on important subregional issues. It is limited since its objective is to deal only with items upon which a true consensus can be reached and defer those about which there is disagreement. It is also limited by the schedule of reporting to the full Mayors and Council Members Committee by its November 9th meeting. The Planning Directors, ABAG staff, a consulting planner and a facilitator are all prepared to help you address this program. Our suggestion is that you schedule two October meetings to review and refine this report, perhaps October 12th and 25th.

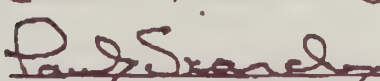
We would like to express our appreciation for your willingness to assume the leadership role in this important program and look forward to working with you to completion.


  
Joe Heckel, Cloverdale


  
Dennis Dorch, Cotati


  
Betsy Lewitter, Healdsburg

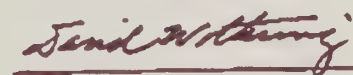
  
Pamela Tuft, Petaluma


  
Paul Skanchy, Rohnert Park

  
Wayne Goldberg, Santa Rosa

  
Richard Spittler, Sebastopol

  
Mike Moore, Sonoma

  
Dave Woltering, Windsor

  
Jeremy Graves, Sonoma County



November 6, 1995

**TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE SONOMA COUNTY MAYORS' AND  
COUNCILMEMBERS' ASSOCIATION**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

About a year ago, a number of the members of the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association began meeting monthly in Santa Rosa to informally discuss issues common to all of our jurisdictions and Sonoma County as a whole. We have since become known as the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Working Group, and our meetings provide a congenial forum for open dialogue on matters of mutual interest and concern. Early on in the process of our formation, the Working Group developed a list of discussion topics for future agendas that to no one's surprise focused on the many planning issues confronting us all: urban form, transportation, resource conservation, economic development, and housing. As we began to talk about these issues, we were approached by the City and County Planning Directors with a grant proposal from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to develop a consensus-based, non-binding subregional (meaning Sonoma County) policy document that addressed many of the topics on our list.

It is now our pleasure to present to the general membership of the Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association the first revision of **Sonoma County Subregion Issues and Policies**. This document is the culmination of an exciting, unprecedented and truly cooperative effort by all of the jurisdictions in the County to organize and establish a comprehensive policy direction on significant countywide planning issues. All of you have had the opportunity to review and express your support (or lack thereof) of the policy recommendations contained in the earlier "working draft" of **Sonoma County Subregion Issues and Policies**. Your response in support of the vast majority of the policy recommendations was overwhelming. Only two of the policies in the entire working draft were deleted due to lack of support, and the twenty-three policies that fell into the category of "Would Consider" were further refined by the Working Group at meetings on October 19 and 26 until consensus was reached on acceptable language for each one.

We hope that in the coming weeks, each city council and the board of supervisors will review this draft in depth, discuss its policy recommendations in public session, and pass on its respective priorities for implementation, as well as any suggested revisions, to its representatives on the Working Group. Working Group members are looking forward to the challenge of continuing to work with each jurisdiction to shape this document into a functional policy guide and implementation program that has the formal support and broad acceptance of all the cities and the county.

Sincerely,

The Mayors' and Councilmembers' Working Group



## **PLANNING DIRECTORS, CONSULTANT AND STAFF**

### **Planning Directors**

#### **Cloverdale**

Joe Heckel, Planning Director

#### **Cotati**

Dennis Dorch, Planning Director

#### **Healdsburg**

Betsi Lewitter, Assistant Planner

#### **Petaluma**

Pamela Tuft, Planning Director

#### **Rohnert Park**

Paul Skanchy, Planning Director

#### **Santa Rosa**

Wayne Goldberg, Community Development Director

#### **Sebastopol**

Richard Spitler, Planning Director

#### **Sonoma**

Michael Moore, Community Development Director

#### **Windsor**

David Woltering, Planning Director

#### **Sonoma County**

Jeremy Graves, Environmental Planning Manager

Richard Lehtinen, Planner III

### **Consultant**

M. Thomas Jacobson, Professor, Sonoma State University

### **ABAG Staff**

Janet McBride, Senior Planner



U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C124910726

